

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01

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R 301930Z APR 76

FM AMCONSUL CALGARY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1643

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS CALGARY 179

E.O. 11652, N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: WESTERN PREMIERS CONCLUDE MEETING

REF: CALGARY S 177, APRIL 29

1. THE CONFERENCE OF WESTERN PREMIERS WAS COMPLETED YESTERDAY AT MEDICINE HAT, WITH THE LEADERS OF THE FOUR PROVINCES SPENDING MOST OF THE DAY DISCUSSING FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL COST SHARING PROGRAMS. THEIR DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE CLIMAXED BY THE ADOPTION OF ALBERTA'S LONG-STANDING

POLICY THAT THE PROVINCES BE GRANTED EXTRA TAX POWERS TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE OVER PROGRAMS NOW JOINTLY FINANCED, INCLUDING HIGHER EDUCATION, HOSPITAL INSURANCE, MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY. THE PREMIERS EMPHASIZED THAT FEDERAL PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE FORMULA BY WHICH INCOME TAX SHARING IS WORKED OUT ARE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE WESTERN PROVINCES, AND SHOULD BE SENT BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD.

2. ALL MEETINGS DURING THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE WERE CLOSED SESSIONS. IN ADDITION TO THE TRANSPORTATION ISSUE DISCUSSED WEDNESDAY (SEE REFTEL) AND THE COST-SHARING ISSUE, UNCLASSIFIED

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THE PREMIERS ALSO ENGAGED IN GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON CON-

STITUTIONAL MATTERS. AND A WESTERN PROVINCIAL TASK FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED TO ANALYZE RECENT FEDERAL MOVES INTO PROVINCIAL CONSTITUTIONAL JURISDICTION. THERE WAS LITTLE DISCUSSION ON THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION ISSUE. THE PREMIERS REPORTEDLY WERE HAPPY WITH RECENT EXTENSIONS OF THE FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION ACT, BUT ASKED FOR PROMPT ACTION ON AN INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR COW-CALF PRODUCERS. ON ANOTHER RARE NOTE OF PRAISE FOR OTTAWA THEY APPLAUDED THE RECENTLY ATTAINED FLEXIBILITY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE FINANCING.

3. THE CONFERENCE CONCLUDED WITH THE PREMIERS ENUMERATING SPECIFIC AREAS FOR GREATER WESTERN COOPERATION. THESE WERE AS FOLLOWS: NEW MARKETS FOR WESTERN PRODUCTS, TRANSPORTATION, A GREATER VOICE IN FEDERAL TRADE AND TARIFF NEGOTIATIONS, MORE LOCALIZED PROCESSING OF RAW MATERIALS, MESHING OF PROVINCIAL RESOURCE POLICIES, AND COORDINATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING. WINNIPEG WAS SELECTED AS THE SITE OF THE 1977 WESTERN PREMIER S CONFERENCE.

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